

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 EB-07 USIA-06 RSC-01 /021 W

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R 240728Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0130

INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, TH

SUBJ: COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM TASK FORCE

REFS: A) THAILAND CCP; B) STATE 265304; C) BANGKOK 0954

1. FIRST MEETING OF CCP TASK FORCE WAS HELD JANUARY 15, CHAIRED BY DCM, WITH 12 MOSTLY SENIOR MISSION OFFICERS PARTICIPATING, REPRESENTING ECON/COMAT, USIS, USOM, AGAT, AND EMBASSY'S CONSULAR SECTION. MUNUTES OF MEETING BEING POUCHED TO EA/TB, FOR DISTRIBUTION TO WAG MEMBERS.

2. SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF TASK FORCE MEETING DEVOTED TO DISCUSSION OF PROBLEMS INVOLVING LOCAL AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY, INCLUDING MISSION'S RELATIONS WITH AMCHAM. WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT, ALTHOUGH NOT EMPHASIZED IN CCP, THESE PROBLEMS ARE SERIOUS AND TIME-CONSUMING AND MUST BE GIVEN TOP PRIORITY BY MISSION. AMONG MATTERS DISCUSSED WERE:

A. ALIEN BUSINESS AND OCCUPATION DECREES AND IMMIGRATION POLICIES. ABD, IN CONTEXT OF AER TREATY, HAS BECOME ACTIVE ISSUE AGAIN, WITH EMBASSY CURRENTLY WORKING INFORMALLY IN EFFORTS RESOLVE JURISDICTIONAL CONFLICTS WITHIN RTG. ALIEN WORK PERMITS, REQUIRED BY AOD, ARE CONSTANT SOURCE OF IRRITATION AND OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES FOR LOCAL AMERICAN COMPANIES. CUMBERSOME AND RESTRICTIVE VISA PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS

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CONSTITUTE PARTICULARLY FRUSTRATING PROBLEM FOR RESIDENT

AMERICAN BUSNIESSMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES. WAS NOTED THAT EMBASSY'S SUCCESS IN EYES OF US BUSINESS COMMUNITY WOULD DEPEND LARGELY ON OUR ABILITY TO RESOLVE SUCH PROBLEMS AS THESE, AND AGREED THAT HIGH LEVEL APPROACH TO RTG SHOULD BE MADE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT.

B. INCLUDING AMCHAM IN PROGRAMS OF VIP OFFICIAL VISITORS. AMCHAM HAS BECOME VERY SENSITIVE THIS ISSUE, AND IS AWARE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB'S COMMITMENT AT HONOLULU CONFERENCE TO APCAC CHAIRMAN TO INCLUDE LOCAL AMCHAM REPS IN SUCH PROGRAMS WHEN POSSIBLE. PROCEDURES WERE DEVELOPED TO ASSURE THAT CONTROL OFFICERS WOULD TAKE POSSIBLE INTEREST OF AMCHAM INTO ACCOUNT IN EARLY STAGES OF SCHEDULING VIP VISITS.

C. INVESTMENT CLIMATE. IT WAS REPORTED THAT INVESTMENT CLIMATE HAS DETERIORATED FOR VARIETY OF REASONS, INCLUDING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY, BUT ALSO LACK OF DIRECTION AND POOR COORDINATION WITHIN RTG. CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN TO MAKING JOINT APPROACH, WITH OTHER EMBASSIES, FOLLOWING ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW GOVT., TO DISCUSS IMPLICATION WITH APPROPRIATE RTG OFFICIALS.

3. DISCUSSION WAS HELD ON POSSIBLE USE OF MILITARY BASES AS INVESTMENT SITES, WHEN BASES CLOSED. THERE WILL BE FURTHER STUDY THIS POSSIBILITY, AND REPRESENTATIVE OF MACTHAI TO BE INCLUDED IN FUTURE TASK FORCE MEETINGS.

4. STATUS OF CCP FOR FIRST HALF FY 75 WAS REVIEWED, WITH CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF HOW U.S. COMMERCIAL POSITION IN THAILAND SHOULD BE REGARDED AND MIGHT BE IMPROVED, AND ROLE TASK FORCE SHOULD PLAY. FOLLOWING ARE MAIN TOPICS AND DEVELOPMENTS DISCUSSED:

A. DCM EMPHASIZED MISSION'S COMMERCIAL PROGRAM MUST BE GIVEN HIGH PRIORITY, WITH ALL ELEMENTS REMINDED TO GIVE TOP LEVEL SUPPORT TO COMAT IN ADMINISTERING PROGRAM, SPOTTING INVESTMENT AND TRADE OPPORTUNITIES AND ATTENDING TASK FORCE MEETINGS.

B. LOW PROFILE EMPHASIS IN CURRENT CCP SHOULD NOT BE INHIBITING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FACTOR IN MISSION'S TRADE PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS. USIS TO PLAY MORE THAN FACILITATIVE ROLE, AND TO TAKE INITIATIVE WHERE APPROPRIATE, IN COORDINATION WITH COMAT. USIS SUPPORT TO INCLUDE PUBLICITY OF COMAT AS WELL AS AGAT RESOURCES, PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES; ASSISTANCE TO COMAT'S DEVELOPING VIDEOTAPE PROGRAM; CONTINUED ASSISTANCE TO COMMERCIAL NEWSLETTER PROGRAM WITH NATURE OF ASSISTANCE TO RELATE TO DEVELOPMENTS AT FORTHCOMING REGIONAL E/C MEETING IN TAIPEI; ASSISTANCE WITH MINI-

SEMINARS FOR LOCAL BUSINESSMEN; AND LIAISON WITH MEDIA. INVESTMENT AND TRADE TO BE GIVEN HIGHER PRIORITY THAN TOURISM.

C. DESPITE DECISION TO DE-EMPHASIZE LOW PROFILE, SOME DOUBT WAS EXPRESSED ABOUT WILLINGNESS OF CENTRAL DEPT. STORE TO HOLD IN-STORE PROMOTION THIS YEAR.

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R 240728Z JAN 75

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D. SUBSTANTIAL AND CONTINUING INCREASE IN VISITORS TO BOTH COMAT OFFICES AND COML. LIBRARY IN 1974 WAS REPORTED, WITH RESULTANT DEMANDS ON REDUCED COMAT STAFF. THE NUMBER OF VISITORS INCREASED BY 66PERCENT IN 1974 OVER THE YEAR EARLIER FIGURE.

E. IN DISCUSSING STATUS OF CCP, COMAT REPORTED THAT ALL SCHEDULED EVENTS HAD BEEN SUCCESSFULLY HELD, WITH FADCP SERVICE UTILIZED IN DEVELOPING CATALOG TRADE LEADS; THAT REQUIRED MARKET RESEARCH UP TO DATE; AND NO DELINQUENCIES IN WTDR OR ADS REPORTING. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES DURING PERIOD INCLUDED STAGING OF THREE LOCALLY-MOUNTED EXHIBITS/SEMINARS IN COML. LIBRARY, REGULAR PARTICIPATION BY MISSION REPRESENTATIVES IN FOUR AMCHAM COMMITTEES, ORGANIZATION OF SEMI-ANNUAL MISSION BRIEFING FOR LOCAL AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND MONTHLY MEETINGS WITH AMBASSADOR AND AMCHAM BOARD, AND COLLABORATING WITH AMCHAM IN ORGANIZING SEPARATE EXIM AND OPIC SENIARS DURING REVIEW PERIOD. SHORTAGE OF OFFICER STAFF, HOWEVER, AS ANTICIPATED IN CCP INTRODUCTION, HAD RESULTED IN

SOME SLIPPAGE IN FULFILLING CCP REQUIREMENTS. THIS INCLUDES
SUSPENSION OF COMMERCIAL NEWSLETTER DURING FIRST HALF OF FY 75,
DELAY IN SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL TRADE OUTLOOK REPORT, INABILITY
SCHEDULE VISITS TO CONSULAR DISTRICTS, AND DELAY IN ORGANIZING
FIRST TASK FORCE MEETING. WITH RECENT DETAIL OF JUNIOR FSO TO
COMAT STAFF FOR SIX MONTH PERIOD, NEXT ISSUE OF NEWSLETTER
SCHEDULED TO GO TO PRINTERS NEXT WEEK. EMBASSY INTENDS MEET
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WAG'S NEW FEB. 1 DEADLINE FOR TRADE OUTLOOK ARTICLE, AND E/C
OFFICERS INTEND MAKE REQUIRED VISITS TO CONSULATES DURING
LAST HALF FY 75. NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR SOON
AFTER FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS.
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